

10th April 1970. League Match v. Barking (away)

WYCOMBE WANDERERS took another precious point to boost their quest for the Isthmian League title, when they drew with a skilful Barking side—one of the trickiest fixtures left to them this season.

Barking 1, Wycombe Wanderers 1 at Vicarage Field

After Friday night's clash of giants, Wycombe seemed well pleased with their share of the spoils. And so they should have been. For home and away, Barking have proved themselves tough opposition this season. So with this match and the return on May 2, four points hung very much in the balance.

Though Wycombe staged a second half show of cultured, attacking football, it was Barking who created—and missed—the game's best chances. With extremely mobile forwards, and the ultra-long throw-ins of Cooper, they pressed hard in the opening half.

It was a testing 90 minutes for deputy 'keeper Kevin O'Brien who, on the night, appeared a weak link in an otherwise solid Wycombe defence.

In the absence of 'flu sufferer, John Maskell, he hardly caught a thing cleanly all the time. Ironically, however, he made some of his most impressive saves when diving bravely at opponents' feet to remedy the situation after first dropping the ball.

The initial hint of O'Brien's lack of confidence in the air came after only five minutes, when a Wilsonham corner dropped into the six-yard box, and with players from both sides watching like statues, big John Delaney stepped in to whack the ball clear.

Wycombe then began to show some of the shooting power which has helped take them to the top of the league.

From his side's first real attack, leading scorer, Tony Horseman hit a first-time volley into the pack of Wycombe supporters who had made the long journey into East London and now stood cheering from behind the Barking net.

Seconds later the same player fed Baker a splendid through pass, but the rising shot brought a brilliant save from home 'keeper, Hadlow.

O'Brien bravely smothered the ball at Ford's feet after another menacing corner, but he could have had no chance with a shot which gave Barking an interval lead.

Home winger, Derek Baker, picked up possession on the left touchline and hit a high cross which eluded everyone in the goalmouth. But wing-half John Ford came steaming at top speed from behind a cluster of players to meet the ball on the volley as it dropped from the sky and sent it screaming into the top left-hand corner of Wycombe's net before anyone could move.

There was more urgency about Wycombe's play in the second half, though they nearly conceded another goal straight away, when Barking's Baker slammed the ball at O'Brien from six yards.

Although Searle was having a quiet game, Hutchinson and Horseman were a constant menace, while Delaney and Suddaby remained firm at the back.

All the time it seemed a Wycombe goal was not far off, and five minutes after the restart, Barry Baker shot past Hadlow from 20 yards, only to see the 'goal' struck out because Anthony had strayed offside in the 'box'.

Not to be denied, Wycombe finally equalised in the 54th minute when Lailey hit an up-and-under down the middle, and the nimble Horseman sped past Jones to prod the ball past the onrushing Hadlow.

From then to the finish it was end-to-end football, with misses at both ends. Wilsonham's swerving effort was pushed along his line by O'Brien, who again smothered at Page's feet.

Ian Rundle moved up for a

corner and completely missed the ball at the near post.

Keith Blunt substituted for Geoff Anthony with 11 minutes left and it seemed Wycombe were making their final bid for the second point.

It was Blunt who popped up on the left wing to hit a shot which bounced off Hadlow's feet and fell to Hutchinson, whose first-time drive was headed off the line by full back Guiver.

After all their efforts, Wycombe almost threw it away in the last minute when a careless throw out from O'Brien nearly left Ford an open goal. But Rundle strained every sinew to beat his opponent to the ball.

BARKING: Hadlow; Cooper, Guiver, Bullman Jones, Ford; Page, Deadman, Fox, Wilsonham, Baker. Sub.: Boyton (not used).

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: O'Brien; Rundle, Gale; Suddaby, Delaney, Lailey; Anthony (sub.: Blunt), Baker, Searle, Horseman, Hutchinson.